

SEATTLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Information Bulletin #991



FIRE WATCH

This information is provided to clarify the requirements for a fire watch. A fire watch is the action of an on-site person whose sole duty is to watch for the occurrence of fire.

Fire Watch Requirements

If a fire protection system fails, or there are an excessive number of accidental activations or nuisance alarms, a building owner (or their representative) may be required by the Fire Department to provide a fire watch until the system is repaired. Personnel to conduct the fire watch are determined by the building owner.

Note: A professional security company is not required.

A fire watch is also required whenever fire protection systems are in a trouble or a supervisory mode for more than eight hours. A nuisance alarm is defined as "any alarm caused by mechanical failure, malfunction, improper installation, or lack of proper maintenance, or any alarm activated by a cause that cannot be determined." (96 NFPA 72 1-4)

Owner Responsibilities

- Establish, instruct and maintain fire watch personnel.
- Notify the monitoring company.
- Notify the Seattle Fire Marshal's Office that the system is not working and again when the system has been repaired. Call the Confidence Testing Unit at 206-233-7219.
- Contact the repair company to fix the fire protection system(s).
- If a Notice of Violation has been written, contact the local Fire Company when the system has been repaired. Their phone number will be on the Notice of Violation. The local Fire Company may be reached during normal business hours.

For More Information:
Fire Prevention Division

206.386.1450

Fire Watch Duties

Personnel serving as a fire watch have the following duties:

- Conduct periodic patrols of the entire facility as specified.
- Identify any fire, life or property hazards.
- Notify the Seattle Fire Department if a fire is discovered by calling 9-1-1 with the exact address and type of emergency.
- Notify occupants of the facility of the need to evacuate. If the sirens or public address function of the alarm system are still functional, use them to assist with evacuation of the building.
- Determine at least one means of direct communication with the Fire Department. A telephone is acceptable.
- Maintain a log of fire watch activities.
- Have knowledge of the location and use of fire protection equipment, such as fire extinguishers.
- Fire watch personnel cannot have other duties besides their assigned fire watch. However, the Fire Department may designate other duties.

NOTE: The fire watch will not perform fire-fighting duties beyond the scope of the ordinary citizen.

Frequency of Inspections

Fire watch personnel should patrol the entire facility every 15 minutes in the following situations:

- The facility has people sleeping.
- The facility is an institutional occupancy.
- The facility is an occupied assembly occupancy.

Facilities that do not meet the requirements for a 15-minute patrol frequency should have a fire watch patrol every 30 minutes. *(over)*

Record Keeping

A fire watch log should be maintained at the facility. The log must be available to the Seattle Fire Department at all times during the fire watch. The log should show the following:

- 1) Address of the facility.
- 2) Times that the patrol has completed each tour of the facility.
- 3) Name of the person conducting the fire watch.
- 4) Record of communication(s) to the Fire Department and monitoring company.
- 5) Record of other information as directed by Fire Department personnel.

Cancellation of Fire Watch

It is the owners' responsibility to cancel the fire watch once the fire protection system has been fully restored. Once the fire watch has been cancelled, the owner or representative must notify the monitoring company, the local Fire Company, and the Fire Marshal's Office. The Fire Marshal's Office is reached during normal business hours at 206-233-7219.

For additional information about fire protection systems or confidence testing of systems, contact the Seattle Fire Department Confidence Testing Unit at 206-233-7219.

References

- The 1997 Seattle Fire Code 103.4.5—Unsafe Building
- The 1997 Seattle Fire Code 1001.5.3.1—Problematic Systems
- The 1998 Seattle Fire Department Administrative Rule 10.1—Alarm monitoring

This and other Seattle Fire Department Information Bulletins can be downloaded from the Department's Web site at <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/fire/Organization/FMO/FMO%20Bulletins.htm>

Sample Fire Log

12345 E. Main Street

Time	Watch Person	Notes
0200	Sally Doe	Started watch
0230	Sally Doe	
0230	John Smith	Maintenance arrived